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July 1, 2016



**Summer Food
Service Program
now available**



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**Help your children continue
learning this summer**



All photos by KDE unless otherwise noted

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Twitter chat

Parents: Want to chat with educators?
A parent/teacher Twitter chat takes place at 9 p.m. every Wednesday. To participate or just follow the conversation, use the hashtag #PTchat.

Summer Food Service Program now available



The Kentucky Summer Food Service Program is once again making sure students' stomachs are full even when classrooms are empty.

During the school year, more than half a million Kentucky students eat breakfast, lunch or both meals at school – often for free or at a reduced price. They count on these meals to keep their stomachs full and their minds active.

When school is out for the summer, many children do not have access to healthy, nutritious meals. Lack of nutrition during the summer months may set up a cycle for poor performance once school begins again and make children more prone to illness and other health issues. The Summer Food Service Program is designed to fill that nutrition gap and make sure children get the nutritious meals they need.

This summer, nearly 2,000 sites across 116 Kentucky counties will provide more than 2 million breakfasts, lunches and snacks to more than 20,000 of Kentucky's neediest children. Children 18 years old and younger are eligible for the free, nutritious meals.

"Just as learning doesn't end when the school year ends, neither does a child's need for good nutrition. Without the Summer Food Service Program and the wonderful sponsors, thousands of children would not get the nutrition they need during the summer months. The development of these children depends in large part on making sure they get nutritious meals all year long," said Mike Sullivan, who manages the program for KDE's Division of School and Community Nutrition.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Southeast Regional Administrator

Robin Bailey joined Kentucky Department of Education staff members in kicking off the program June 14 at Calvary Elementary School near Lebanon.

The Marion County schools and Superintendent Taylor Schlosser hosted the event, where guests toured the Dream Bus, a repurposed school bus that has been converted into a mobile learning bus and is being used during the summer to deliver meals to children in communities throughout Marion County.

More than 150 program sponsors, including school districts, private nonprofit organizations, local government agencies, churches and community organizations sponsor feeding sites.

The program is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is administered by the Kentucky Department of Education, Division of School and Community Nutrition.

To locate a feeding site, call the National Hunger Hotline at (866) 3HUNGRY or (866) 348-6479. Meals also can be located by texting "Food" to 877-877.



Pruitt testifies before Congressional committee on ESSA; calls for common sense approach

Kentucky Education Commissioner Stephen Pruitt testified before the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce in Washington, D.C., June 23, commending lawmakers for passing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which gives states more flexibility in how they measure student success while also holding schools accountable for closing achievement gaps between groups of students.

“In Kentucky, we are working to move all children to higher levels of learning while also determining the root cause of achievement gaps, which we believe stem from opportunity gaps and access to rigorous, high-quality learning opportunities,” Pruitt said.

The U. S. Department of Education (USED) recently released proposed regulations that would govern the implementation of ESSA. USED is accepting public comment on the regulations until Aug. 1.

During the hearing, Pruitt said while he appreciated the department’s speed in developing the proposed regulations, he has concerns they contain many restrictions and requirements.

“The proposed regulations stifle creativity, innovation and the sovereignty of states to govern their own education policies,” he said.

Further, Pruitt said, the volume and complexity of the proposed regulations are in direct opposition to Kentuckians’ desire for a simple accountability system that would allow for a “broader, fairer and more accurate representation of school performance” versus a single summative score.

“In Kentucky, we found that a summative score leads to ranking and creates an unhealthy sense of competition rather than a collaboration and collegiality that supports

school improvement,” he said. “We also found that, in some instances, it becomes more about adults chasing points and trying to ‘game’ the system to manage the appearance of performance, rather than actual performance.”

Pruitt also raised concerns that USED is asking states to identify their lowest performing schools based on their existing accountability systems, and then subsequently hold those schools responsible for making progress under a new accountability system.

He suggested to the committee that states should be allowed to support their existing low-performing schools in 2017-18, and then re-identify new low-performing schools in 2018-19 once the new accountability systems are in place.

“Now, more than ever, what states need to implement ESSA is honest two-way communication, consistency and to be trusted to make good decisions. We need a common sense approach that supports a quality system of assessments, accountability and school improvement measures that can be implemented with fidelity and will promote doing what is right for kids,” Pruitt said.

Pruitt said he is concerned that may not happen if a compliance over quality mentality prevails, with the focus not on doing what is best for students, but on bureaucracy. As an example, he noted USED’s effort to force Kentucky to give students science tests that are not aligned with the state’s academic standards and report performance levels that are not truly reflective of student learning.

Kentucky is currently developing new science assessments aligned with its science standards, which will be piloted in spring 2017.

“Kentucky is committed to fully realize the intent of ESSA. If this law truly represents

a new day for education in America, states must have the support to take action based on quality and what is best for students and move away from the compliance mentality,” Pruitt said. “The Commonwealth of Kentucky looks forward to revised standards that empower states with the freedom to plan, innovate, design and implement quality education systems that will ensure opportunity for all students and promote the pillars of equity, achievement and integrity within Kentucky education policy.”

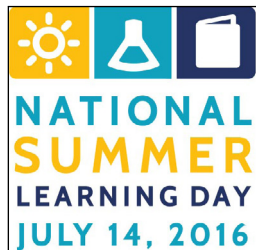
The commissioner’s oral testimony can be accessed [here](#). Pruitt also provided more in-depth and detailed written comments to the committee, which can be found [here](#).

The full hearing can be seen at <https://youtu.be/uxnbGJlz66g?t=991>. Commissioner Pruitt’s testimony can be found at <https://youtu.be/uxnbGJlz66g?t=7867>.



Photo courtesy of Edworkforce Committee

Help your children continue learning this summer



Even though school is out, summer learning programs across the country are making sure kids continue to learn new things, make academic strides and stay physically active.

The National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) is celebrating the importance of summer learning programs with [National Summer Learning Day](#), July 14.

Research shows that children can experience learning loss – falling behind in key areas like reading and math – over the summer months. Summer learning programs often play a critical role in inspiring learning, providing academically enriching activities, keeping kids safe and healthy and supporting working families. Nationally,

33% of families say at least one child attended a summer program in 2013.

However, the demand for summer programs exceeds the current rate of participation, with 51 percent of families reporting that they would like their children to participate.

Click [here](#) to see a message from First Lady Michelle Obama about the importance of summer learning.

Visit the [NSLA website](#) to find a National Summer Learning Day event near you, register your own event and explore summer learning [resources for families](#) or [communities](#).



Education Accountability Steering Committee announced



Commissioner Stephen Pruitt has named a 37-member steering committee to advise him on the development of a new education accountability system for Kentucky.

“This work is about 650,000 young people sitting in classrooms across the state and making sure they get the best education possible,” Pruitt told the committee at its first meeting on June 2. “We have to get out of a mentality of compliance with accountability and focus on quality, if we want to make progress on closing achievement and opportunity gaps and make the gains we need for the benefit of our children. Every one of them needs to be prepared to pursue college, postsecondary training, military service or a job upon high school graduation.”

The committee will consider input gathered to date, as well as recommendations from five work groups. The public will have an opportunity for input on the proposed accountability system before it is finalized and approved by the Kentucky Board of Education.

The current timeline calls for the new system to be in place for the 2017- 18 school year. [Video](#) and [audio](#) recordings of the steering committee’s first meeting are available online.

The full list of committee members and more information is available [here](#).

New members join Kentucky Board of Education; meeting focuses on accountability

Five new members assumed their seats on the Kentucky Board of Education June 8. Franklin District Court Judge Chris Olds administered the oath of office to:

- Ben Cundiff, a chemical engineer and an attorney from Cadiz
- Gary W. Houchens, who is from Bowling Green and an associate professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Leadership and Research at Western Kentucky University
- Alesa G. Johnson, who is from Somerset and an electrical engineer and associate dean for Workforce Solutions at Somerset Community College
- Rich Gimmel, chair of Atlas Machine and Supply Inc., in Louisville
- Milton C. Seymore of Louisville. He is retired from Ford Motor Co. and serves as pastor of Energized Baptist Church.

In his report, Commissioner Stephen Pruitt shared a [letter](#) with the board that he sent to the United States Department of Education (USED) taking exception to its change on the state's administration of science tests and also a proposal that would require the state to identify the lowest performing schools for a new accountability system using data from the old system.

On a related matter, Pruitt and Associate Commissioner Rhonda Sims reported on the development of a new accountability system under the federal [Every Student Succeeds Act](#). They summarized feedback from the education Town Hall Meetings held this spring. Overarching themes included:

- Our children must be at the heart of the system.
- A well-rounded education is important and necessary.
- All subjects, both tested and nontested, need to be valued.
- Access and opportunity for students are critical.
- An emphasis on teaching is needed.
- Collaboration instead of competition among schools and districts

needs to be the focus.

"Staying with the status quo is not good enough for the Commonwealth," Pruitt said. "We need a system that will generate better outcomes for all of our kids and will support the economic development of Kentucky."

Also during the meeting, Pruitt delivered summaries from extensive on-site reviews of the instructional, intervention and special education services at the [Kentucky School for the Blind \(KSB\)](#) and the [Kentucky School for the Deaf \(KSD\)](#).

At each school, the report noted several areas of noncompliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In addition to the KDE review, external partners conducted a review of instructional practices and identified both strengths and areas for growth. KDE issued an all-encompassing Corrective Action plan for each school. KSB must complete its plan by February 2017. KSD must complete its plan by May 2017.

In addition, the board received updates on the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) [Kentucky Survey Results and work](#), the [Teach Kentucky program](#), [2016 legislation](#) and the enacted [2016-18 biennial budget](#).

The board is next scheduled to meet Aug. 3-4 in Frankfort for its annual retreat and regular meeting.



Students may apply to be delegates for The World Food Prize symposium

Your high school's students can serve as Kentucky's delegates for The World Food Prize's international symposium as part of the Global Youth Institute. Up to two student delegates will be selected to represent the Commonwealth at the institute, scheduled for Oct. 13-15 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Kentucky's delegates will join more than 400 other outstanding high school students and teachers from across the United States and around the world for an exciting three-day program. They will have the opportunity

to interact with Nobel and World Food Prize laureates, and the more than 1,000 global leaders from 75 countries attending the symposium.

To participate, students research a global issue – such as food security factors and developing nations – and write a five-page paper under the supervision of a teacher mentor. Each high school must register their student delegate nominee(s) and submit each student's research paper online by Aug. 1. Ninth- through 12th-grade students are eligible

to apply.

All submitted registrations and research papers will be evaluated by a committee of experts and invitations to attend the Global Youth Institute as a student delegate representing Kentucky will be emailed by Aug. 15. For more information, go to The World Food Prize [webpage here](#).

